

ESSAY IV.

ON SOME OF THE CAUSES BY WHICH EVANGELICAL
RELIGION HAS BEEN RENDERED UNACCEPTABLE TO
PERSONS OF CULTIVATED TASTE.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND,
IT is striking to observe, under what various forms of character men are passing through this introductory season of their being, to enter on its future greater stage. Some one of these, it may be presumed, is more eligible than all the rest for proceeding to that greater stage; and to ascertain which it is, must be felt by a wise man the most important of his inquiries. We, my friend, are persuaded that the inquiry, if made in good faith, will soon terminate, and that the Christian character will be selected as the only one, in which it is wise to advance to the entrance on the endless futurity. Indeed the assurance of our permanent existence itself rests but on that authority which dictates also the right introduction to it.

The Christian character is simply a conformity to *the* whole religion of Christ. This implies a cordial admission of that whole religion ; but it meets, on the contrary, in many minds not denying it to be a communication from God, a disposition to shrink from some of its peculiar properties and distinctions, or an effort to displace or neutralize them. I am not now to learn that the substantial cause of this is that repugnance in human nature to what is purely divine, which revelation affirms, and all history proves, and which perhaps some of the humiliating points of the Christian system are more adapted to provoke, than any other thing that bears the divine impress. Nor do I need to be told how much this chief cause has aided and aggravated the power